

BIBLE VERSES:

Ruth 2, 2 Samuel 9, Acts 15:36-41, Ephesians 4:32

The aim of this session is to look at examples of kindness and to think about how we can be kind.

LEADER'S NOTES

"And be ye kind" Paul exhorts the Ephesians.

Kindness is a fruit of the spirit, something we should expect, as Christians, to be cultivating. Being kind to people is something that requires effort on our part, it is more than NOT being unkind, it is a reaching out and saying or doing something positive to help another person.

Kindness falls into 3 categories – kind thoughts, kind words, kind deeds. It comes most easily if the deeds result from the thoughts, but of course it is possible to do kind deeds even when you don't feel like it! Parents – and group leaders – do it all the time: that child who has been causing chaos, and who you are longing to see leave, is the one who bursts into tears and although your instincts are shouting, "serve him right" you go over kindly and find out what is wrong. That is the right response. That is the kind thing to do.

Children face this all the time – the child who has scribbled on your work and been an absolute pain all morning suddenly asks if he can play with you at play time. You want to say no, because he has been so horrible. But the kind thing is to say yes. To give a second chance.

Being kind, then, is not always easy. It is quite easy to be kind to people who are kind to us: easy to invite someone for tea when they have invited you, for instance; it is much harder to be kind to someone who won't be kind back - when you always share your sweets, but you know you will never be given anything in return. And, actually, most children are essentially selfish, and even the kindest will find it hard to share something they particularly like with even their best friends!

So this session looks at what it means to be kind, and I have chosen to look at doing kind actions, not thoughts.

For the Bible activity, there are 3 stories to choose from – David and Mephibosheth, Boaz and Ruth, and John Mark and Barnabas. Each story ends with a challenge to the children as to how they can be kind in the same way as the character in the story, and each has a specific Take Away activity which links in some way to the story.

David went out of his way to find a descendant of Jonathan, and found Mephibosheth. Mephibosheth did not deserve David's kindness for any reason of his own, and yet David showered him with kindness throughout his life, letting him live at the palace and giving him wealth. Sometimes we might choose to be kind to someone who has not deserved it at all, and who will not be able to repay our kindness.

Boaz was kind to Ruth because he had seen how she was kind to Naomi. He made it easier for her to

support her family by his instructions to the other harvesters. (Later on, obviously, he made it extremely easy for her by marrying her!) Sometimes we can be kind by helping someone that we can see struggling.

Barnabas was kind to John Mark. Paul had written him off, but Barnabas gave him a second chance and took him on a mission trip, even at the price of splitting with Paul. Barnabas was always known as the encourager – it was he who brought Paul to the apostles in the first place (Acts 9) and he who brought him to Antioch, so it is not surprising that he would want to give the young John Mark a helping hand. Paul was focussed on his mission, but Barnabas was focussed on helping the young man in whom he had seen potential. And he was rewarded – later on, Paul found John Mark a helpful companion. Barnabas's actions changed John Mark's life. Can we give someone a second chance, or do we write them off?

The response section encourages the children to think of ways in which they can be kind in their own lives. Challenge them to choose a kind deed, or a person to be kind to, during the following week.

BED TIME BABY

GAME |  **WATCHER** |  **WARMING UP**

Each team will need 5 people in it.

Put all the items (apart from the doll) on a chair. Place the chairs at equal distances from each other. The teams, and the dolls, should line up opposite one of the chairs.

When the game starts the first child in the team takes the doll and runs to put it on the chair. They then return to their team.

- Child number 2 undresses the doll.
- Child number 3 puts on the nappy.
- Child number 4 puts on the nightclothes.
- Child number 5 lays the doll down under the blanket.

The first team to complete everything is the winning team.

The Point: Just for fun.

EQUIPMENT

For each team: A dressed doll (each doll must wear similar garments – e.g. just a dress, a dress and hat, trousers and a jumper), nightclothes for the doll, a small nappy, a blanket.

DURATION: 10 MINS.

PIECES MISSING

GAME |  **WATCHER** |  **WARMING UP**

Give each team a jigsaw puzzle. It will be easiest if each puzzle is quite obviously different to all the others. Before the activity starts, swap some of the pieces over so that each team has 2 or 3 false pieces, each belonging to another team. (Obviously each team will have an equal number of false pieces – the amount you swap will depend on the number of teams your group will have and, of course, the size of puzzle you feel is appropriate.)

When the activity starts, tell the children that when they discover their wrong pieces they must go and give them to the correct group.

The winning team isn't the one to complete their puzzle first, but the one who was kindest in finding the correct owners for the missing pieces... you will have to judge that as they work!

The Point: Just for fun, and providing an opportunity to be kind.

EQUIPMENT

A small jigsaw – 25-30 pieces – for each team.

DURATION: 10 MINS.

KIND ACTS

DISCUSSION |  **WATCHER** |  **WARMING UP**

Sit in a circle.

Say that often people can be unkind, but today we want to think about the kind things people do for us.

Ask the children to go around the circle, and for each one to say something kind that someone has done for them. Comment that we all value kindness!

The Point: To begin to think about kind actions we have received.

EQUIPMENT

None

DURATION: 10 MINS.

LOOKING FOR MEPHIBOSHETH

STORY |  WATCHER |  TEACHING TIME

Choose a child to be David. Send him out of the room. Now choose one child to be Mephibosheth. When David comes back into the room, he has to guess which child is Mephibosheth. Let him have several guesses.

You may like to play this 2 or 3 times. There will be nothing (apart from a guilty expression) to give the correct answer away.

Say that Mephibosheth was a man who had a bad leg. He couldn't walk properly. He was quite poor, and not at all important.

David was the King of Israel. He was rich and everybody knew all about him. He was confident and proud. Ask the children to move like a king.

Now get the children to go into pairs. Have one stand like Mephibosheth and the other stand like King David.

Ask the children how these two men could come together in one story? Let them have some guesses.

Say that one day. David summoned Mephibosheth to the Royal Palace. Mephibosheth came, very nervous, wondering what would happen to him.

Ask the children, in their pairs, to mime out Mephibosheth coming to David.

When Mephibosheth came in, he was very nervous, but David surprised him.

"Your father was Jonathan, my best friend," he announced. "And because of that, I am going to be kind to you. I am going to give you the land that your grandfather used to own, so you will be rich. And as well as that, you are going to live here with me and eat at my table every day."

"But why?" asked Mephibosheth, completely confused, "You don't know me."

"I knew your father, and he was kind to me." David explained.

Ask the pairs to mime David and Mephibosheth talking now.

And from then on, Mephibosheth lived well, and as if he was part of David's family... all because his father was kind to David and David was kind to him in return.

Ask the children if they think being kind to people helps them to be kind to you?

How can we be kind to other people? Can they think of anyone that they can choose to be kind to – maybe a child at school who doesn't have any friends?

The Point: To see how David chose to be kind to Mephibosheth and to raise the question, should we be kind?

EQUIPMENT

None

DURATION: 10 MINS.

IN THE FIELDS

STORY |  **WATCHER** |  **TEACHING TIME**

Choose a child to be Ruth. The rest are harvesters.

Scatter your straws/twigs, etc. over the floor. Give the harvesters 1 minute to gather them all up. Ruth will get anything that is left.

Time a minute and see how much the gatherers can gather. See what is left for Ruth (Hopefully nothing ... you can be creative with your minute in order to make sure that everything is gathered.)

Now scatter the grass/straws again, but this time, tell the gatherers that Ruth is very poor. If there is no straw left for her, she won't be able to eat. Time them again. Hopefully they will have left something for Ruth this time.

Sit the children down and tell the story:

Ruth lived with her mother in law, Naomi. They were both widows, so they lived alone together. Ruth had chosen to stay with Naomi, to look after her (she could have gone back home to her own parents, and lived a comfortable life).

One day they had nothing to eat. Ruth decided that she would go into the harvest fields. She would collect up the bits of corn that were left over when the harvesters had finished, and they could make it into bread.

A man called Boaz saw Ruth. He had heard how kind she had been to Naomi, and he decided to be kind to Ruth. He told the people who worked for him to drop some corn on purpose for Ruth to pick up. At lunch time, he let her sit with his workers and share their food and drink. In the end, Ruth was able to collect enough corn to feed her and Naomi.

Later on, Boaz was even kinder to Ruth. He married her, and because he was rich, Ruth and Naomi lived happily ever after.

Ask the children if they can be kind to Boaz – is there someone they know who is working very hard? How could they help them?

For instance, maybe someone at school is struggling with work... or maybe it's someone at home, and they could be kind by helping to tidy up.

The Point: To see how Boaz was kind to Ruth.

EQUIPMENT

Art straws, twigs, or long pieces of grass/reeds

DURATION: 10 MINS.

NOT HIM!

STORY |  **WATCHER** |  **TEACHING TIME**

Tell the story:

When he was young, John Mark went with Paul and Barnabas on their first mission trip. Paul wanted to travel, to tell people about Jesus and to start churches. John Mark was very excited, but after only a short time he got homesick and left them to go home to his mum. Ask the children if they have ever felt homesick – maybe when they were at a friend's house or sleeping over at Nanny's?

A couple of years later, Paul and Barnabas decided to go on another trip. They wanted to see how the new churches were doing, and to go to new places as well.

"Let's take Mark," suggested Barnabas.

"Mark? Why? He left us last time... he's a nuisance," replied Paul.

But Barnabas was kind and he wanted to give Mark a second chance. In the end the two men argued. Paul went off with Silas, and Barnabas took Mark with him and went to Cyprus.

Ask the children why they think Barnabas wanted to take Mark again, even though he had been a nuisance the last time?

Say that Barnabas wanted to give Mark a second chance. Ask the children if they have ever been given a second chance?

Say that Barnabas's kindness helped Mark in a big way; after going on the trip with Barnabas, who was kind to him, Mark became a courageous young man, and in the end Paul realised what a good help he could be. Later on, Mark was kind to Paul when he was in prison. In fact, Mark travelled the whole world helping people and telling them about Jesus... and all as a result of Barnabas being kind when he was a young, nervous man.

Say that being kind to people can really help them.

Ask the children if there is someone in their class who they could give a second chance to?

The Point: to see how Barnabas's kindness helped Mark to grow into a confident person.

EQUIPMENT

None

DURATION: 10 MINS.

KIND HANDS

PRAYER |  **WATCHER** |  **RESPONSE**

In groups, pray for each other. You may want to put a leader with each small group, or if your children are used to praying they might be happy to go on their own, and the leaders can hover – or help – with the groups that are less familiar with praying.

Encourage the children to pray for each other, asking God to help them to be kind to people.

Some children will know that they are unkind to certain people – maybe siblings! And they could ask God specifically for help with this.

The Point: To ask for God's help.

EQUIPMENT

None

DURATION: 10 MINS.

KIND DEEDS

ACTIVITY |  **WATCHER** |  **RESPONSE**

Brainstorm what kind actions we might be able to do for other people.

Now play a game – the children will dance to the music, and when the music stops, they can mime doing a kind action. Comment on some of the actions you see as you play.

When you finish (stop the music 4 or 5 times), challenge the children to choose one of their actions to practise at home this week.

The Point: To think specifically about practising kindness.

EQUIPMENT

Music and the means to play it.

DURATION: 10 MINS.

BE KIND

MEMORY VERSE |  WATCHER |  RESPONSE

"Be kind to one another"

Ephesians 4:32

Give the box of sweets to one of the leaders, and stand the children in a circle.

The leader offers a sweet to one of the children, saying, "Be kind to one another."

After the child has chosen a sweet, they take the box and offer a sweet to another child, saying the verse as they do so.

Continue until everyone has had a sweet. The last child should offer the sweets to a leader.

You can do this in a circle, so that everyone knows who is next, or you could do it so that each child chooses someone randomly. In this case, everyone should stand up until they have been given a sweet, when they should sit.

The Point: To help the children to learn Scripture.

EQUIPMENT

A box of sweets

DURATION: 5 MINS.

FIT FOR A KING

CRAFT IDEAS |  WATCHER |  TAKE AWAY

This activity will work well with the Teaching Time activity "Finding Mephibosheth"

Make a plate of food fit for a King.

Give each child a paper plate. Let them cut out food shapes from the paper and stick them onto their plates.

You could pre-cut some pieces before the session if you have time – circles to be grapes or raisins, larger circles to be rolls, fish shapes and so on.

Alternatively, let the children draw a meal on their plates, which would be less messy (and involve less preparation).

The Point: To create a meal-picture to remind the children that Mephibosheth ate at David's table.

EQUIPMENT

Paper plates, sugar paper in brown, green and purple, scissors, glue.

DURATION: 10 MINS.

HARVEST PRINT

CRAFT IDEAS |  **WATCHER** |  **TAKE AWAY**

This activity will work well with the Teaching Time activity "In the Fields"

Before the session, cut the vegetables into shapes or just blocks.

Let the children dip the vegetables into the paint and print with them on their paper, making whatever pattern they want.

The Point: A story reminder using harvest things.

EQUIPMENT

Cut up vegetables, paint, and paper.

DURATION: 10 MINS.

SANDALS

CRAFT IDEAS |  **WATCHER** |  **TAKE AWAY**

This activity will work well with the Teaching Time activity "Not Him!"

To make a pair of sandals:

Give each child a sheet of card, big enough to stand on with both feet. Help the children to draw round their feet – you may like to ask them to do this in pairs.

Once they have drawn round their feet, they need to cut round the foot shapes, but leaving a border of about a centimetre so you can attach a top and some laces. (Again, some will need help with that.)

Now make a top to cover the toes of the shoe. Use a length of crepe paper – it might be nice if the children can choose from a selection of colours – fold to about 5 cm thick and 3 or 4 thicknesses for added strength. Staple one end of the crepe paper to the side of the shoe base – about where the big toe would start – and

ask the child to stand on the sole while you measure how big the loop of paper needs to be to comfortably go over the foot and staple on the other side. Staple the other end in place and trim the ends. The child can now slide his foot in and out of the sandal.

If you like, you could also punch holes at either side of the heel and thread a length of string that can be tied around the top of the foot, or criss-crossed up the calf like ballet shoes.

Let the children use pens to decorate their shoes. That way, while they are waiting for help, they can carry on with decorating and colouring – it can be done before or after cutting!

The Point: A reminder craft, to remember Barnabas and John Mark sharing the gospel.

EQUIPMENT

Thin card, crepe paper, string, hole punch, stapler, pens.

DURATION: 15 MINS.
